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U.S. and EU Agree to Boost Environment Cooperation

The European Union and the United States held the inaugural meeting of the EU-U.S. High Level Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development in Helsinki, Finland, on October 24-25, 2006.

At the EU-U.S. Summit in Vienna in June, the leaders agreed to establish this dialogue in recognition of the serious and linked challenges in tackling climate change, promoting clean energy and achieving sustainable development globally.

The objective of the Dialogue is to build on existing transatlantic initiatives and further advance the 2005 G8 Gleneagles Plan of Action for Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development. The talks are guided by the ultimate objective of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

EU and U.S. delegations at the Helsinki meeting highlighted the substantial and growing level of U.S.-European collaboration and explored areas for further work.

Discussion topics included: policies and measures to promote low greenhouse gas emission technologies; cleaner energy; cleaner and more efficient vehicles; and biodiversity loss.

The two sides recognised their common objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving the global environment, enhancing energy security, and cutting air pollution.

Both sides underlined the importance of creating the right mix of both supply and demand side policies, including a variety of market-based mechanisms to accelerate commercial use of clean technologies.

The EU and U.S. delegations agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation including to

- * Promote the commercial deployment of clean coal and carbon sequestration technologies, including through the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum;

- * Promote energy efficiency, particularly in the transportation sector and for buildings and appliances;

- * Enhance methane recovery including through the Methane-to-Markets Partnership;
- * Research, develop and deploy second-generation biofuels;
- * Overcome barriers to the use of renewable energy sources and biofuels, including through the development of international standards;
- * Address global biodiversity loss through natural resource conservation and other joint efforts; and
- * Enhance energy access for sustainable development

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to continue joint dialogue and efforts under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change including work on long term cooperative action in the process established in Montreal in December 2005.

The participants agreed to continue the dialogue through annual meetings. The next High Level Meeting will be in 2007 in the U.S.

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